

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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EB-07 AF-06 NEA-10 SAM-01 /062 W

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P 241802Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8137

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 05523

FOR EUR/WE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP FR

SUBJECT: VICE PRESIDENTIAL VISIT, MARCH 20-23--BRIEFING
MATERIAL

1. US-FRENCH RELATIONS AND THE STATUS OF US POLICY
OBJECTIVES IN FRANCE WERE ANALYZED IN PARIS 3088 OF JANU-
ARY 30, 1976. THERE HAVE BEEN NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN
THE BASIC SITUATION SINCE THAT TELEGRAM. THIS MESSAGE
WILL THEREFORE CONCENTRATE ON ISSUES THE FRENCH LEADERS
ARE LIKELY TO RAISE WITH THE VICE PRESIDENT, AS WELL AS
SUGGESTIONS FOR SUBJECTS THE VICE PRESIDENT MAY WISH TO
RAISE.

2. ISSUES THE FRENCH ARE LIKELY TO RAISE:

A. US POLITICS -- THIS WOULD BE AN AUTOMATIC SUB-
JECT OF CONVERSATION IN ANY US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
YEAR. BUT THIS YEAR, THE FRENCH ARE ESPECIALLY CON-
CERNED BECAUSE OF THE ELECTION'S LINKAGE TO FOREIGN
AFFAIRS. IN THE WAKE OF ANGOLA, THE FRENCH WILL WANT
THE VICE-PRESIDENT'S ANALYSIS OF CONGRESSIONAL INVOLVE-
MENT IN THE DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS OF FOREIGN POLICY,
AND HOW THE ELECTION IS LIKELY TO AFFECT THIS PHENOME-
NON. THE PHRASE USED COMMONLY IN FRANCE TODAY IS
"THE TEMPORARY ECLIPSE OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY."

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FRENCH LEADERS ARE LIKELY TO ASK THE VICE PRESIDENT IF

THE ECLIPSE IS PARTIAL OR TOTAL, AND HOW LONG IT IS
LIKELY TO LAST.

B. NEW YORK POLITICS AND THE CONCORDE -- SINCE
LANDING RIGHTS AT JFK ARE CRUCIAL TO THE SUCCESS OF
CONCORDE COMMERCIAL SERVICE TO THE US, THE FRENCH ARE
LIKELY TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT'S EXPER-
TISE TO ASK ABOUT CONCORDE'S CHANCES AT JFK IN TERMS OF
NEW YORK STATE AND CITY POLITICS.

C. AFRICA -- HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY, TRADE AND CULTURE
COMBINE TO GIVE FRANCE A SPECIAL INTEREST IN AFRICA. THE
FRENCH MAY ASK THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR AN UPDATE OF US
THINKING ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF CUBAN INVOLVEMENT AND
SOVIET INTENTIONS IN AFRICA AFTER ANGOLA. THEY MAY ALSO
ASK ABOUT OUR PLANS TO HELP STABILIZE ZAIRE AND ZAMBIA,
AND WHAT WE ENVISAGE IN RHODESIA AND NAMIBIA.

D. MIDDLE EAST -- AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF
FRANCE'S OVERWHELMING DEPENDENCE ON MIDDLE EAST ENERGY,
THE VICE PRESIDENT MAY BE ASKED FOR ASSURANCES THAT THE
MOMENTUM TOWARD PERMANENT PEACE CONTINUES IN THE ARAB-
ISRAELI CONFLICT.

E. THE ECONOMY -- AT THE RAMBOUILLET ECONOMIC SUM-
MIT LAST DECEMBER, PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING CLAIMED A
SUCCESS BECAUSE THE MAJOR INDUSTRIALIZED DEMOCRACIES HAD
DEMONSTRATED THE WILL TO COORDINATE POLICIES IN THE MIDST
OF THE BIGGEST ECONOMIC RECESSION SINCE 1932. HE MAY
ASK THE VICE PRESIDENT'S VIEWS AS TO HOW THE WILL TO
COORDINATE ECONOMIC POLICIES CAN BEST BE DEVELOPED IN
PRACTICAL WAYS AMONG THE INDUSTRIAL NATIONS OF THE WEST.
GISCARD IS VERY MUCH INTERESTED IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC
OUTLOOK, AND MAY ASK THE VICE PRESIDENT HOW GLOBAL ECO-
NOMIC DEVELOPMENTS ARE VIEWED IN WASHINGTON, INCLUDING
PROSPECTS FOR THE US ECONOMY THIS YEAR.

3. SUBJECTS THE VICE PRESIDENT MAY WISH TO RAISE:

A. COURTESY SUBJECT -- PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING
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WILL BE MAKING AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE US NEXT MAY.
ONE OF THE EVENTS WILL BE AN ADDRESS TO A JOINT SESSION
OF CONGRESS. THE VICE PRESIDENT MAY WISH TO ASK GISCARD
IF HE IS PLEASED WITH ARRANGEMENTS TO DATE, AND WHETHER
OR NOT THE VICE PRESIDENT COULD BE HELPFUL WITH RESPECT
TO ANY PARTICULAR ASPECT OF THE TRIP.

B. EUROPE -- A MORE RAPID POLITICAL UNIFICATION OF

EUROPE IS A PRINCIPAL ELEMENT IN GISCARD'S FOREIGN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 05523

POLICY. THERE IS SUSPICION IN PRO-EUROPEAN CIRCLES HERE THAT THE US IS OPPOSED TO FURTHER PROGRESS TOWARD EUROPEAN POLITICAL UNION. WE RECOMMEND THAT THE VICE PRESIDENT ASK GISCARD ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR ADVANCING EUROPEAN UNITY THIS YEAR, AND THAT HE TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ANY CONVERSATION ON THE SUBJECT TO REITERATE US SUPPORT.

C. SOCIALIST-COMMUNIST ALLIANCE -- WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT COMMUNIST PARTIES MAY JOIN GOVERNMENTS IN ITALY AND FRANCE IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE THROUGH COALITIONS WITH NON-COMMUNIST PARTIES. IF THIS HAPPENS, THE ENTIRE STRUCTURE OF THE WESTERN DEFENSE ALLIANCE WILL BE MENACED. IN FRANCE, THE SOCIALIST-COMMUNIST ALLIANCE LOOKS AS IF IT WILL REMAIN IN BEING AT LEAST UNTIL THE CRUCIAL SPRING 1978 LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS DESPITE INTERNAL STRAINS, AND DESPITE GISCARD'S EFFORTS TO WOO AWAY THE SOCIALISTS. GISCARD IS AWARE OF OUR CONCERNS, WHICH HE SHARES. THE VICE PRESIDENT MAY WISH TO ASK GISCARD ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR STRENGTHENING HIS MAJORITY COALITION OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS.

D. SPAIN AND PORTUGAL -- THE FRENCH CONSIDER DEVELOPMENTS ON THE IBERIAN PENINSULA TO BE OF VITAL IMPORT-

ANCE TO THEM. OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS ENJOY A GENERAL
CONVERGENCE OF VIEWS ON THIS SUBJECT. WE TEND TO BE A
BIT MORE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT PROSPECTS IN PORTUGAL, WHERE
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THE FRENCH CONSIDER THE PROBLEMS OF EMBRYONIC DEMOCRACY
TO BE VIRTUALLY INSURMOUNTABLE, AS THEY ARE IN MOST
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. THE VICE PRESIDENT MAY WISH TO
GIVE THE LATEST US VIEW OF THE PORTUGUESE SITUATION WITH
THE OBJECTIVE OF ENCOURAGING GREATER FRENCH BILATERAL
ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. IN SPAIN, WE AGREE THAT THERE MUST
BE PROGRESS TOWARD LIBERALIZATION, WITH THE SPANISH TEAM
CURRENTLY IN POWER SETTING ITS OWN PACE DESIGNED TO
AVOID AN EXTREMIST ENDING TO THE POST-FRANCO SCENARIO.
THE FRENCH WILL BE HAPPY TO HEAR THE VICE PRESIDENT
REITERATE OUR VIEW THAT WE DO NOT CONSIDER SPAIN'S EVEN-
TUAL MEMBERSHIP IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY TO BE INCOMPAT-
IBLE WITH SPAIN'S EVENTUAL MEMBERSHIP IN NATO. ON THE
CONTRARY, WE CONSIDER THE TWO ASSOCIATIONS MUTUALLY
REINFORCING.
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